

## **Assignment for Chapter 4: Designing the Document: Format and Graphics**

### **Document Design Critique Assignment**

The purpose of this assignment is to help students learn good document design by looking at good design. It works best when students find and critique a document similar to one they will need to write for the course (e.g., a set of instructions, a long report with graphics). However, this assignment can also be adapted to have students look at other types of documents that appeal to them visually (e.g., a short sales brochure, a magazine) or to look at only the use of and design of graphics in a document (e.g., the use of graphics in a textbook or user manual, the use of graphics in a newspaper). Alternatively, you can ask students to find and critique a poorly designed document.

It is often useful not only to have students turn in a typed critique but also to ask students to briefly present the main ideas of their critique to others in the class (either in small groups or to the whole class).

### **Overview of Assignment for Students**

In this assignment, you will analyze the design of a short technical document such as a set of instructions or a short report or article. The document you choose must contain at least one graphic.

### **Requirements**

Your completed document design critique should be 2 typed, double-spaced pages. You should also be prepared to briefly present the main points of your critique to others in the class.

1. To begin your critique, provide a brief overview of the document, its purpose, and its intended audience to provide the context for your analysis.
2. Describe and evaluate the following elements. How do these help support the document's purpose and/or affect the readability and usability of the document?
  - The formatting of textual elements (e.g., font size, typeface, justification, spacing, bullets)
  - The use of graphics (e.g., charts, drawings, photographs)
  - The use (or lack of) color
  - The use of layout and typography to create a visual hierarchy
3. Conclude your critique with a discussion of how all these design elements work together to meet the document's purpose and to appeal to the intended audience. What do you think the information designer's rationale was for designing the document as he or she did?